

29th General Conference of Directors of National Libraries in Asia and Oceania
1-2 November 2023, Wednesday & Thursday
Doha, Qatar

Country Report
[Period Coverage: 1 January 2022 – 31 December 2022]

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| Name of Country | : | Singapore |
| Name of Library | : | National Library, Singapore |
| Name(s) of National Librarian, Director-General and/or Director | : | Alicia Yeo (Director, National Library) |
| Contact Person | : | |
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1 Facts and Figures

| Sn | Item Description | Figures |
|----|---|----------------------------------|
| a | Operating Budget i. Government ii. External Sources | \$2.6 million |
| b | Total Staff (FTE) i. Graduate or Post Graduate with library qualifications ii. Other Qualifications | 94 |
| c | Collection Size i. Physical collection ii. Digital collection preserved | i. 2.57 million ii. 2 million |
| d | Visitorship (Annual) i. Physical visits to reading rooms ii. Digital visits to websites | i. 1,397,268 ii. 15,902,877 |
| e | Inter Library Loans provided (Annual) | 417 |

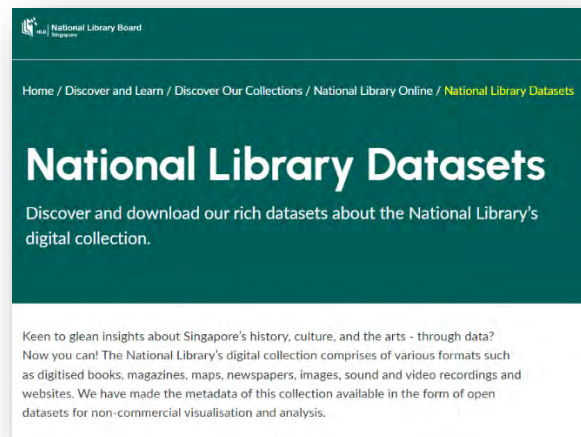
2 Overview of Major or New Developments in Library Buildings, Collections, Access or Services [Please provide a maximum of 5 highlights]

2.1 Open Datasets

The National Library (NL) of Singapore has published 10 open datasets covering a range of formats from images, maps, music albums, lyrics & music scores, newspapers to websites from NL's digital collections. This marks the successful launch of NLB's very first open datasets released by NL for public access, and contributes to the broader trend among Galleries,

Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAMs) to provide open data that can be freely used for innovation and research.

The datasets can be viewed and downloaded from the National Library Online webpage and Data.gov.sg. With the datasets, users can visualise and analyse them to uncover insights on Singapore's history, art, and culture.



2.2 Web Archive Singapore extended to include key news websites

The National Library Board (Prescribed Websites) Regulations 2022 was published in the gazette on 28 October 2022 and came into operation on 31 October 2022. NL's efforts to archive the Singapore internet will now extend to key news websites prescribed as "Singapore websites," allowing us to build a more comprehensive collection of online news on Singapore.

2.3 Acquired & Donated Singapore and Southeast Asia items (Highlights)



Presenting Singapore: A Collection of 11 broadcast typescripts – Arranged by the Friends of Singapore

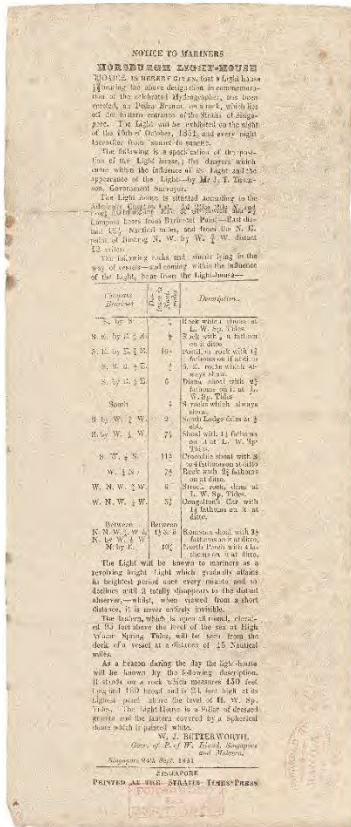
Consists of typescripts of a weekly Singapore radio broadcast series "Presenting Singapore" by different authors and presenters from October 1940 to January 1941. In total, there were 16 broadcasts in the series but the collection lacks 5 of the typescripts. The purpose of these talks was to give to the citizens of Singapore some idea of the social history and culture of the different communities. Leading local citizens, such as F. N. Chasen, Syed Alwi Alhady, A. M. Alsagoff representing many different races and

communities cooperated in the undertaking.



**新嘉坡写真帖. [Shingapōru shashinchō].
[Photographic Album of Singapore]**

An album of 25 photographs of pre-war Singapore produced by the Sekidenkan Hotel, perhaps for distribution to guests. The Sekidenkan Hotel (碩田館; Beach Road), established in 1901, was one of the oldest Japanese-owned hotels in Singapore which existed right up to the Japanese Occupation. The first photo in the album shows the front of the hotel with groups of guests gathered outside. Other images in the collection (all of them labelled with English captions) depict Beach Road, St. Andrew's Road, Connaught Drive, Anderson Bridge at the entrance to the Singapore River, the police station on Robinson Road, the Botanic Gardens, Bukit Timah Reservoir, a Malay Village in St. James Bay and the beach at Bedok (spelt as Bedoh). Though it is not indicated, it is likely that the photographs were taken by a Japanese photographer in Singapore.



Notice to Mariners. Horsburgh Light-House

This is a single-page broadside announcing the commencement of the Horsburgh Lighthouse's daily operations on 15 October 1851. The lighthouse, completed earlier on 27 September on Pedra Branca, was named after James Horsburgh, the Hydrographer of the East India Company from 1810 to 1836. This notice was issued prior to the commencement of regular operations and was also published in the *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* on 6 October 1851 (Page 1) and in the *London Gazette*, two months later (19 December 1851). At the bottom of the page are two faint contemporary "forwarding" rubberstamp marks in red, which read as "Forwarded by Boustead & Co" and "Forwarded by Russell & Sturgis, Manila". Boustead & Co was a British trading company first established in 1850 in London. It was one of the founding members of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Company, founded in 1864 in Singapore. Russell & Sturgis was an American trading firm based in Manila and was involved in the China opium trade of the 19th century. The origins of the company are unclear, though it was already in operation in the early parts of the 1800s.

1,460 audio reels by Rediffusion (2012) Pte Ltd were also donated. They comprise stories and radio plays in Chinese dialects broadcasted pre-1980, infotainment programmes featuring various themes and local celebrities, and advertisements broadcasted over Rediffusion, Singapore's first cable-transmitted radio programme.



2.4 Curiosity: Refreshed website with digital stories

Curiosity started as a website for map-based, placed-related stories. It was spearheaded by our librarians to showcase the National Library's map and photograph collections. Leveraging VR and digital storytelling, the website provides an interactive and immersive way to discover and rediscover the history of Singapore. The Curiosity website was refreshed with a suite of new and engaging Singapore content, including:

- **Curiosity: Places & Perspectives**, an art showcase spotlighting fascinating histories in downtown Singapore in partnership with the Light to Night Festival 2022 from 3 Jan– 3 Feb 2022.
- **Curiosity Treasure Hunt**, which encourages participants to discover Singapore and its history through games and puzzles, running from 24 Jan – 10 Apr 2022. This enables encounters with stories about districts and neighbourhoods drawn from NLB's and partners' collections.
- **Curiosity Encounters: Singapore Night Festival 2022** showcase in August 2022, was held in collaboration with National Heritage Board's Singapore Night Festival 2022 (19 – 27 August) in the Bras Basah Bugis precinct, and consisted of 1 display, 3 installations, 5 programmes and online content. The showcase told the little-known stories of Singapore and shone a light on overlooked aspects of Singapore's history. It attracted a total of 91,164 visitors to the display and installations.
- The new digital stories on the Curiosity website focused on the Bras Basah district and introduced narratives from entertainment, learning, food and historical perspectives, which enable encounters with stories about districts and neighbourhoods drawn from NLB's and partners' collections.



2.5 #SingaporeStorytellers video series

The #Singapore Storytellers video series highlighted the collections of the National Library and the National Archives of Singapore through innovative storytelling. Comprising three original video series, the aim is to tell stories of Singapore – about the people who lived, the food we

love, and the way things were, creating different entry points to history and heritage targeted at different audience groups.

The video series were released from April to June 2022 on the [NLBSG YouTube channel](#) and Facebook pages to reach a bigger digital audience.



- From Book to Cook**

This 5-part series targets Singaporeans' love of food through old recipes found in the National Library collection. Hosted by NLB librarian Paddy, this light-hearted cooking series focused on food for mass appeal.
- Stories from BiblioAsia**

This 4-part series takes fascinating BiblioAsia essays and turns them into compelling video stories, bringing lesser-known stories of Singapore to life. The micro-documentary series was aimed at history buffs and anyone who loves a good story.
- The Time Travelling Trio**

This 4-part series follows Sarah, Rina and Rokawa - the Time Travelling Trio, as they go back in time to learn about Singapore's past with Liana, the friendly librarian. The fun series is aimed at children under 12 years old.

These videos as well as NLB's multi-format e-Resources were also made available through KrisWorld, Singapore Airlines' (SIA) in-flight entertainment system, in a tie-up between NLB and the national carrier. SIA passengers can now enjoy NLB content while flying.



3 Collaborations with Libraries, Archives and Museums in your Country [Please provide a maximum of 5 highlights]

3.1 Digital Humanities Projects with the National University of Singapore (NUS)

- a) The [Digital Historical Maps of Singapore and Southeast Asia](#) platform by Yale-NUS expands access to maps of the Southeast Asian region. Spearheaded by Principal Investigator, Jane Jacobs, the project focuses on (historic) early maps, therefore maps and charts of Southeast Asia that were out-of-copyright were selected. The portal was designed to facilitate research on early Singapore and Southeast Asia; Southeast Asian Trade; Growth of Port Cities in the region. NLB is glad to have contributed to this project, over 300 digitised maps and charts of Southeast Asia from its collection.

- b) NLB and NUS also collaborated on a project to create Geographic Information System (GIS) map layers on Singapore's Epidemic, Environmental, and Urban History (Project). NLB is glad to work with Professor Kenneth Dean and Dr Stefan Hubner for this project where maps contributed by NLB were used to create GIS map layers, based on historical vegetation, land-use change, and epidemiological maps using different data points on maps provided by NLB and deploy the GIS layered maps created to different digital humanities projects including:
 - Singapore Historical GIS – including Historical Maps of Singapore, Kampongs, and Cemeteries; and
 - Singapore and Southeast Asia Historical Biodiversity Platform. Check it out [here](#).

3.2 NLB x DPC Digital Preservation Talk

The National Library and the National Archives of Singapore in collaboration with the Digital Preservation Coalition organised digital preservation talks on 27 and 28 July 2022. The talks were opened to NLB staff, Singapore academic libraries, Southeast Asian archives as well as libraries and archives in Australia and New Zealand.

The speakers examined the professional development challenges in digital preservation, as well as the risks and changes around digital preservation storage. The two online sessions attracted a total of 360 participants with many from various Singapore academic institutions and Southeast Asian libraries.

3.3 Collaboration with Singapore Book Publishers Association (SBPA)

An agreement was inked with local publishers to supply book covers of Singapore publications for NLB's online catalogue through SBPA. An estimated 70,000 book covers from as early as the 1970s are expected to be put up by 2023. Moving forward, NL will continue to receive book covers of new publications from SBPA.

3.4 Collaboration with Museums for Children's Season 2022

Held as part of the Children's Season 2022 organised by Singapore's Museum Roundtable, families explored the fascinating world of news media and learnt the importance of information literacy by attending special workshop, touring The News Gallery located at the National Library Building, as well as playing interactive games as part of the tour.



3.5 Collaborations with other local agencies, societies & organisations



a) In collaboration with Tamil Language Festival 2022, Woodlands Regional Library opened Tamil Cholai – translated as “Tamil Garden” – Singapore’s largest Tamil literary collection with over 20,000 physical items. It gives patrons a deeper understanding of Singapore’s multicultural heritage through specially-curated works on Indian arts, culture and traditions in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil.

b) In collaboration with the Bioethics Advisory Committee, the Bioethics Corner was opened at the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library to cater to the growing importance and interest in ethical issues relating to healthcare and biomedical sciences. About 13,600 books and 5,500 e-books related to bioethics are available at the library and via the NLB Mobile App, with more to be added over the next two years. A panel discussion on the need of bioethics and use of interpretable artificial intelligence, was held in conjunction with the launch.





- c) NLB inked a Memorandum of Understanding with the Singapore Computer Society (SCS) to formalise both parties' commitment to further public education in digital knowledge and skills. SCS has partnered with NLB to organise programmes that inspire people to learn about information technology trends and innovations, and empower people to apply technology to their daily lives.



- d) NLB and the Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide more Mother Tongue Language (MTL) resources and programmes to promote bilingualism from a young age, and grow the pool of local MTL writers.
- e) NLB supported the Children's Festival organized by Gardens by the Bay with NLB's Mobile Library, MOLLY and storytelling sessions conducted by NLB's pool of volunteers over the course of 4 weekend from 28 May to 19 June 2022. This collaboration is expected to last for two years.

4. Collaboration with community partners, green entrepreneurs and schools

NLB launched a series of interactive installations that roved to parks and gardens across Singapore, known as "Nodes at Parks". "Nodes at the Parks" features two components – the Sustainability Showcase and the Sustainable Benches. Through the Sustainability Showcase, the public can learn more about sustainable products and ways to lead a sustainable lifestyle, donate and borrow pre-loved books, and contribute to the Singapore Green Plan 2030. The Sustainable Benches were repurposed from recycled wood of which 14 were painted by students from seven secondary schools based on their creative interpretations of NLB's sustainability-themed resources.



4 International Collaborations such as Formal Arrangements for Cooperation with National Libraries [Please provide a maximum of 5 highlights]

4.1 Recognition of NLB's Historical Asian Children's Literature Collection by UNESCO



The Historical Asian Children's Literature Collection (HACL) was recognised by the UNESCO Memory of the World Committee for Asia Pacific (MOWCAP) as an indelible part of the region's culture and heritage.

The HACL, which comprises about 5,000 books produced from 1890-1990, has been officially added to the UNESCO MOWCAP Regional Register. The collection features mainly fictional titles, including folk-tales, fairy tales, and historical fiction set in Asia. It also includes a selection of biographical stories of historical figures in Asia and books on travel, socio-cultural issues, and customs in Asia. The collection comprises bilingual works, and titles in English, Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, as well as other Asian languages.

4.2 Collaboration with World Wide Fund for Nature Singapore (WWF Singapore)

The World Wide Fund for Nature Singapore (WWF Singapore) donated a tiger sculpture Tribal Gold to Choa Chu Kang Public Library to mark NLB's long-term collaboration with WWF-Singapore since 2018. Patrons can scan a QR on the sculpture to access an interactive Curiosity story map that tells the story of how Singapore's last reported wild tiger was killed, and better understand environmental issues and promote wildlife conservation.



4.3 Live screenings of the FIFA World Cup 2022

Bringing the community together over football, NLB hosted **live screenings of the FIFA World Cup 2022 finals and third-place play-off** on two evenings at the Plaza of the National Library Building. Featuring a massive 300-inch screen, patrons enjoyed the experience which included fringe activities such as screenings of NLB's specially produced video on Singapore's football history, trivia quizzes and food vendors offering quick bites.



4.4 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Library of Australia (NLA)

NLB and the National Library of Australia has signed a new MoU at the sidelines of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions World Library and Information Congress, at Cork, Dublin, Ireland on 25 July. The three-year MoU builds upon a partnership that has spanned 20 years between both institutions. Both parties will work together to share expertise on library technology and processes, digitisation of materials and share information on culture and heritage.

